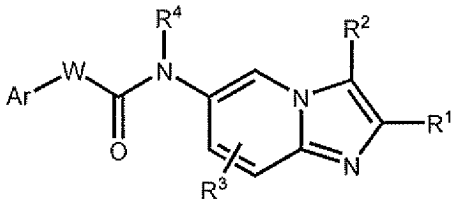
IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-19. (Cancelled).

20. (Currently Amended) A compound of formula [I]



[I]

wherein:

each R^1 and R^2 are independently selected from the group consisting of:

(1) hydrogen

(2) halogen

(3) C_{1-6} alkyl

(4) C_{3-8} cycloalkyl-C_{0-4} alkyl

(5) C_{1-6} alkylamino

(6) di-C_{1-6} alkylamino

(7) C_{1-6} alkylcarbonylamino

(8) C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, and

(9) 3 to 8-membered heterocycloalkyl-C_{0-4} alkyl,

wherein the C_{1-6} alkyl moiety may be substituted with R^5, the cycloalkyl or heterocycloalkyl moiety may be substituted with R^6, and R^1 and R^2 are not hydrogen at the same time, or

R^1 and R^2 together form -$(CH_2)_m$-, m standing for an integer of 3 – 6, wherein 1 or 2 hydrogen atoms constituting methylene may be substituted with R^6;

R^3 is hydrogen, halogen, C_{1-6} alkyl or C_{1-6} alkyloxy;

R^4 is hydrogen or C_{1-6} alkyl;

each R^5 is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, cyano, hydroxyl, amino, optionally fluorine- or hydroxyl-substituted C_{1-6} alkyl, mono-C_{1-6} alkylamino, di-C_{1-6} alkylamino, optionally fluorine-substituted C_{1-6} alkyloxy, C_{1-6} alkyloxy-C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{1-6} alkyloxycarbonyl, C_{1-6} alkyloxy- carbonylamino, C_{1-6} alkyloxycarbonyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyl, C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyloxy, C_{1-6} alkylcarbonylamino, C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, carbamoyl, mono-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyl, di-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyl, carbamoylamino, mono-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoylamino, di-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoylamino, mono-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyl-(C_{1-6}

alkyl)amino, di-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, carbamoyloxy, mono-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyloxy, di-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyloxy, C_{1-6} alkylsulfonyl, C_{1-6} alkylsulfonylamino, C_{1-6} alkylsulfonyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, sulfamoyl, mono-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoyl, di-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoyl, sulfamoylamino, mono-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoylamino, di-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoylamino, mono-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, di-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino and pyridone;

R^6 is R^5 or oxo;

W is:

(1) ~~linker (single bond)~~ 1, 4-piperidin-di-yl,

(2) mono- or bi-cyclic, 3 to 8-membered aromatic ~~or aliphatic~~ heterocyclic group,

(3) mono- or bi-cyclic, 3 to 8 membered aromatic or aliphatic carbocyclic group,

(4) C_{2-4} alkylene in which the carbon in the main chain may be substituted with oxygen, or

(5) C_{2-4} alkenylene in which the carbon in the main chain may be substituted with oxygen,

wherein those substituents in above (2) through (5) may be optionally substituted with R^5; and

Ar is an ~~optionally~~ R^7-substituted aromatic carbocyclic group or aromatic heterocyclic group, said aromatic carbocyclic group or aromatic heterocyclic group selected from the group consisting of:

(1) phenyl,

(2) naphthyl,

(3) pyridinyl,

(4) pyrimidinyl,

(5) pyridazinyl,

(6) pyrazyl,

(7) pyrazole,

(8) pyrrolyl,

(9) imidazolyl,

(10) triazolyl,

(11) oxazolyl,

(12) isoxazolyl,

(13) oxadiazolyl,

(14) thiazolyl,

(15) isothiazolyl,

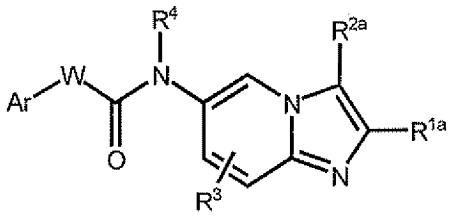
(16) thiadiazolyl, and

(17) tetrazolyl;

wherein R^7 is selected from R^5;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

21. (Previously Presented) The compound according to Claim 20 of formula [I-1]



[I-1]

wherein:

R^{1a} and R^{2a} are each independently selected from the group consisting of:

(1) hydrogen,

(2) halogen,

(3) C_{1-6} alkyl,

(4) C_{3-8} cycloalkyl-C_{0-4} alkyl,

(5) C_{1-6} alkylamino,

(6) di-C_{1-6} alkylamino,

(7) C_{1-6} alkylcarbonylamino,

(8) C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, and

(9) 3 to 8-membered heterocycloalkyl,

wherein the C_{1-6} alkyl moiety may be substituted with R^{5a}, the cycloalkyl or heterocycloalkyl moiety may be substituted with R^6, and R^{1a} and R^{2a} are not hydrogen at the same time, or

R^{1a} and R^{2a} together form -(CH_2)m-, wherein m is an integer from 3 to 6, and wherein 1 or 2 hydrogen atoms constituting methylene may be substituted with R^6;

each R^{5a} is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, cyano, hydroxyl, optionally fluorine- or hydroxyl-substituted C_{1-6} alkyl, optionally fluorine-substituted C_{1-6} alkyloxy, C_{1-6} alkyloxy-C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{1-6} alkyloxycarbonyl, C_{1-6} alkyloxy- carbonylamino, C_{1-6} alkyloxycarbonyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyl, C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyloxy, C_{1-6} alkylcarbonylamino, C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, carbamoyl, mono-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyl, di-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyl, carbamoylamino, mono-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoylamino, di-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoylamino, mono-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, di-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, carbamoyloxy, mono-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyloxy, di-C_{1-6} alkylcarbamoyloxy, C_{1-6}

alkylsulfonyl, C_{1-6} alkylsulfonylamino, C_{1-6} alkylsulfonyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, sulfamoyl, mono-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoyl, di-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoyl, sulfamoylamino, mono-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoylamino, di-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoylamino, mono-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, di-C_{1-6} alkylsulfamoyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino and pyridone, and

R^3, R^4, R^6, W and Ar are as defined in Claim 20

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

22. (Previously Presented) The compound according to Claim 20, wherein R^1 is C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{1-6} cycloalkyl, C_{1-6} alkylamino, di-C_{1-6} alkylamino or C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

23. (Previously Presented) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R^2 is hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{1-6} cycloalkyl, C_{1-6} alkylamino, di-C_{1-6} alkylamino or C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyl- (C_{1-6} alkyl)amino, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

24. (Previously Presented) A compound according to Claim 21, wherein R^{1a} is C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{1-6} cycloalkyl, C_{1-6} alkylamino, di-C_{1-6} alkylamino or C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)- amino, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

25. (Previously Presented) A compound according to Claim 21, wherein R^{2a} is hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{1-6} cycloalkyl, C_{1-6} alkylamino, di- C_{1-6} alkylamino or C_{1-6} alkylcarbonyl-(C_{1-6} alkyl)-amino, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

26. (Previously Presented) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein the 3 to 8-membered heterocycloalkyl moiety is selected from the group consisting of tetrahydrofuranyl, tetrahydropyranyl, pyrrolidinyl and piperidinyl.

27. (Previously Presented) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R^3 is hydrogen, methyl or methoxy, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

28. (Previously Presented) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R^4 is hydrogen or methyl, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

29. (Previously Presented) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein W is selected from the group consisting of 1,2-dimethylene, 1,4-phenylene, 2-fluoro-1,4- phenylene, pyridin-2,5-di-yl, pyrimidin-2,5-di-yl, pyrazin-2,5-di-yl, 1,4-piperidin-di-yl, 1,2,4-triazol-1,3-di-yl, 1,4-cyclohexylene and oxymethylene, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

30. (Previously Presented) A compound according to Claim 20, in which Ar is selected from the group consisting of pyrrol-1-yl, phenyl, 2-fluorophenyl, 3-fluorophenyl, 4-fluoropheny, 4-chlorophenyl, 3,4-difluorophenyl, 2,4-difluorophenyl, 2-trifluoromethylphenyl, 3-trifluoromethylphenyl, 4-trifluoromethylphenyl, 4-methoxyphenyl, 4-methanesulfonylphenyl, pyridin-2-yl, 3-methylpyridin-6-yl, 2-fluoropyridin-5-yl, 3-fluoropyridin- 6-yl, 3-chloropyridin-6-yl, 2-difluoromethylpyridin-5-yl, 3-difluoromethylpyridin-6-yl, 2-methoxypyridin-5-yl, 2-methoxypyridin- 6-yl, 3-methoxypyridin-6-yl, 2-difluoromethoxypyridin-5-yl, 3-difluoromethoxypyridin-6-yl, 3-trifluoromethylpyridin-6-yl, 2-trifluoromethylpyridin-5-yl, 2-pyrimidinyl, 2-pyrazinyl and 3-pyridazinyl, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

31. (Previously Presented) A compound according to Claim 20, which is N-(2,3-dimethylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-6-yl)-4'- (trifluoromethyl)[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-carboxamide, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

32. (Previously Presented) A compound according to Claim 20, which is N-(2-cyclopropyl-3-methylimidazo[1,2-a]- pyridin-6-yl)-4-(2-pyridyl)benzamide, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

33. (Previously Presented) A compound according to Claim 20, which is N-(2-cyclopropyl-3-methylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin- 6-yl)-4-(1H-pyrro-1-lyl)benzamide, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

34. (Cancelled).

35. (Currently Amended) The method of inhibiting binding of melanin concentrating hormone to a melanin concentrating hormone receptor ~~treating a disease mediated by the melanin concentrating hormone receptor~~ comprising administering to a patient ~~in need of such treatment~~ a therapeutically effective amount of a melanin concentrating hormone receptor antagonist compound according to Claim 20, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

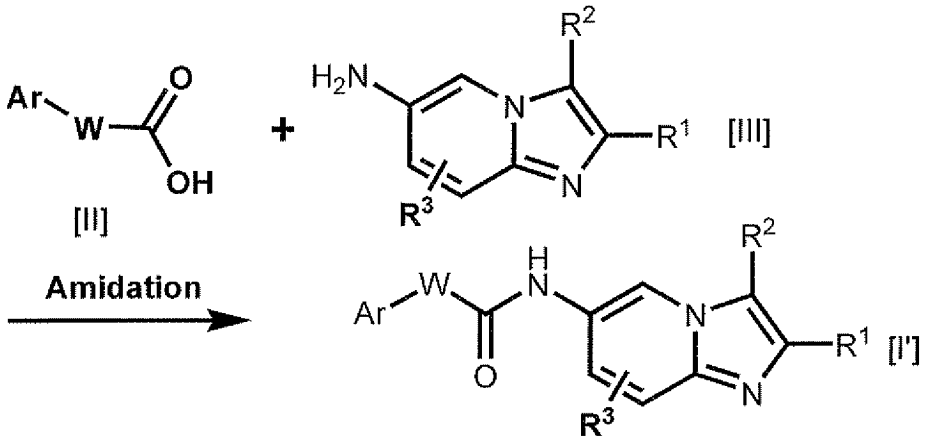
36. (Previously Presented) The pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to Claim 20, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

37. (Cancelled).

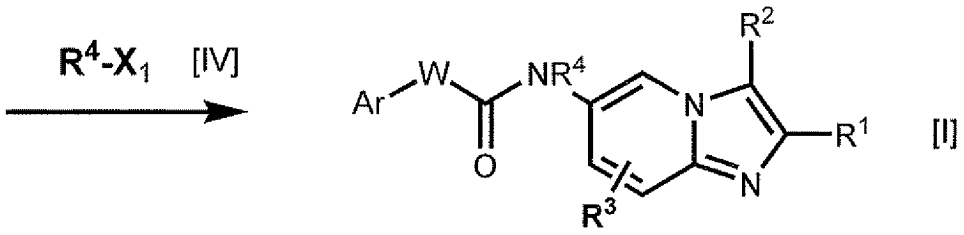
38. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~preventing or~~ treating obesity in a patient in need thereof comprising administering to said patient a therapeutically ~~or prophylactically~~ effective amount of a compound according to Claim 20, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

39. (New) A method for producing a compound according to Claim 20 of formula [I] which comprises the steps of:

(1) amidating a compound represented by a general formula [II], wherein Ar and W are as defined in Claim 20, with a compound represented by a general formula [III] wherein R^1, R^2 and R^3 are as defined in Claim 20; and



(2) optionally condensing, where R^4 is not hydrogen, the compound as obtained in the above step with a compound represented by a general formula [IV], wherein X_1 is a leaving group and R^4 is defined in Claim 20:


R4-X1 [IV]
Ar
W
O
NR4
N
N
R2
R1
R3
[I]